

access for a bonding agent. For this reason the applicant submits that these references do not render obvious claims 21, 23, 24 and 26.

The Examiner rejected claims 22 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hellenkamp in view of Dybbs in further view of Richey. The applicant submits that these claims are allowable for being dependent upon allowable independent claims.

The Examiner rejected claim 45 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hellenkamp in view of Simon. Claim 45 recites a notch located along a side edge of the blade. The notch allows for easy handling of the blade assembly. Neither Hellenkamp or Simon disclose or suggest to provide a notch along the side of the blade. For this reason the applicant submits that these references do not render unpatentable claim 45.

In view of the above it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections is requested. Allowance of claims 21-26 and 45 at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
IRELL & MANELLA, LLP

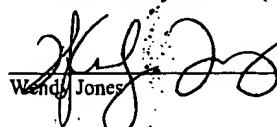
Dated: August 7, 2003


BEN J. YORKS
Reg. No. 33,609

840 Newport Center Drive, Suite 400
Newport Beach, CA 92660
949-760-0991

Certificate of Facsimile Transmission

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile transmission to Attn: Examiner Sarah Web, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Fax No.: (703) 305-3590 on August 7, 2003.

 8/7/03
Wendy Jones Date

AppendixIN THE CLAIMS

Claims 21, 24 and 45 have been amended as follows.

21. (Twice Amended) A blade assembly that can be assembled into a microkeratome used to cut a cornea, the microkeratome including a pin, comprising:
a blade that has a cutting edge, a rear edge, and a pair of side edges that extend between said cutting edge and said rear edge;

a blade holder that is coupled to said blade, said blade holder having a recess that receives the pin, and a hole; and,

a bonding agent that is introduced through said hole and attaches said blade holder to said blade.

24. (Twice Amended) A blade assembly that can be assembled into a microkeratome used to cut a cornea, the microkeratome including a pin, comprising:

a blade that has a cutting edge, a rear edge, and a pair of side edges that extend between said cutting edge and said rear edge; and,

a blade holder that is coupled to said blade, said blade holder having a recess that receives the pin and bonding access means; and,

bonding means for bonding said blade holder to said blade and which is introduced through said bonding access means.

45. (Twice Amended) A blade assembly that can be assembled into a microkeratome used to cut a cornea, the microkeratome including a pin, comprising;

a blade holder having a front surface and a recess that receives the pin; and

a blade attached to said blade holder, said blade having a pair of side edges, a cutting edge, a rear edge and a notch[an opening] that extends through a thickness of said blade and is located between said cutting edge and said front surface along one of[between] said side edges.